

**AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT**

Please substitute the following paragraph(s) for the abstract now appearing in the currently filed specification:

~~The present invention provides various m~~Methods and devices are provided for mating spinal fixation elements, such as fixation rods, to various spinal anchoring devices, such as plates, hooks, bolts, wires, and screws. ~~In an exemplary embodiment, a~~An implantable spinal connector is provided having a clamp member with top and bottom portions that are connected to one another at a terminal end thereof, and that are adapted to seat a spinal fixation element there between. The top and bottom portions are preferably movable between an open position in which the ~~top and bottom~~ portions are spaced a distance apart from one another, and a closed position in which the portions are adapted to engage a spinal fixation element positioned there between. The connector can also include a bore extending through the top and bottom portions for receiving a locking mechanism that is effective to lock the ~~top and bottom~~ portions in the closed position to retain a spinal fixation element there between.